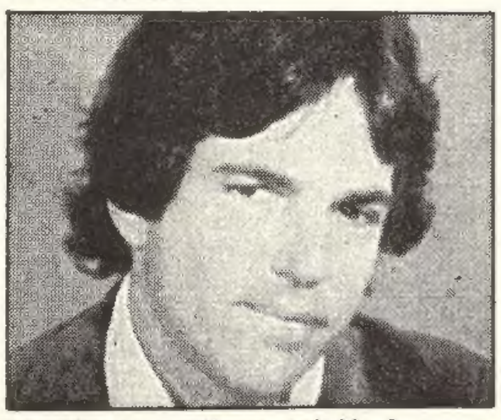
This Weekend

Events • Dining • The Lively Arts • Coming Attractions

Inside Information

Lowriders



Lowriding is more than a car hobby for some young Mexican Americans in San Jose — it's an integral part of their lifestyle. Staff Writer Vicki LaRue Reed says Tony Bill, the producer of 'Boulevard Nights' uses documentary techniques to capture the realism.

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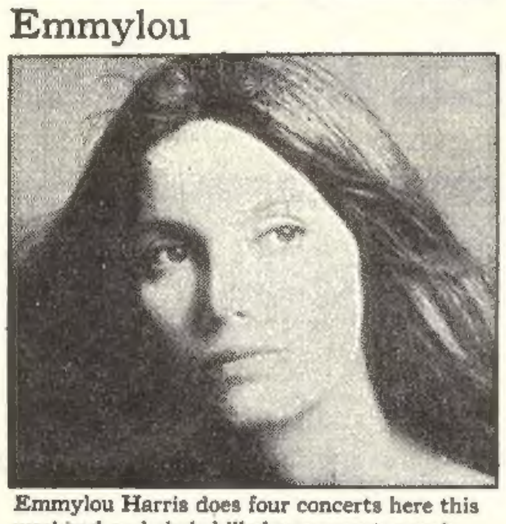
Emmylou



Emmylou Harris does four concerts here this weekend and she's billed as a country-rock singer by one promoter and a folk singer by another promoter. Emmylou Harris says, "whether I'm country, pop or cross-over, basically what I do is sing." Staff Writer Gail Tagashira has the whole story.

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'Body Snatcher' show

Staff writer Janos Gereben says that no matter how long Denny Zeitlin may continue his successful career, he's probably going to be pegged that 'Body Snatcher' person. Zeitlin, who did the soundtrack for the remake of the film, will be in concert Saturday night.

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Getaways

The architectural and historical legacy of Pacific Grove will be showcased this weekend as the coastal community celebrates "Good Old Days" with contests, entertainment and a parade. Don't miss the Victorian Home tour. Staff Writer Mary Gottschalk has details.

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Works of art

The Triton Museum has mounted a pleasant exhibition of Elizabeth Boott Duvenick's works. H.J. Weeks says her show is nicely organized and the small catalogue is of historical interest. Weeks thinks the artist may not be at ease handling oils in a loose technique for her watercolor work seems superior. Get the whole picture.

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Pizza and penny arcade

By Mary Gottschalk
Staff Writer

DOLLI'S hair is a little too orange, the finger rings are a bit flashy and the pink brocade dress she wears is a snug contradiction to the white ruffled collar. But when she winks those big blue eyes and offers in a throaty, sexy voice to "Let Me Entertain You," there is no resisting her.

Dolli Dimples is knocking them dead at Pizza Time Theater.

And so are Chuck E. Cheese, Jasper T. Jowls, Pasqually and that purple-pizza-eating Mr. Munch. All of them are computer animated cartoon characters, larger than life-size (except Ms. Dimples who is the right size for your average hippopotamus.)

How kids rate the place, 2D

Ms. Dimples entertains in a piano bar setting, usually surrounded by wide-eyed youngsters. At the drop of a quarter, she will do one of 20 different routines, most composed of song medleys with a few double entendres thrown in for good measure. The one song she sings all the way through, natch, is "Hello Dolly."

In an adjoining room the other characters share the spotlight, switching into motion every eight minutes. In addition to their 12 regular routines, they have three separate versions of "Happy Birthday," and Pasqually is a great ad libber for other momentous occasions.

If Dolli isn't entertaining you, and you're tired of singing birthday greetings to six-year-olds, drop by Mr. Munch's Magic Madhouse for some disco dancing to strobe lights in a padded environment, crawl your way through the 16-square-foot maze Big Cheese, or try your skill on the 125 video, pinball and arcade games in the Fantasy Forest Game Preserve. In another month you will even be able to take a spin on bumper cars.

The reality, or unreality of it all, is best summed up by Mike Hatcher, the entertainment director, who says, "We're show business with a side order of pizza."

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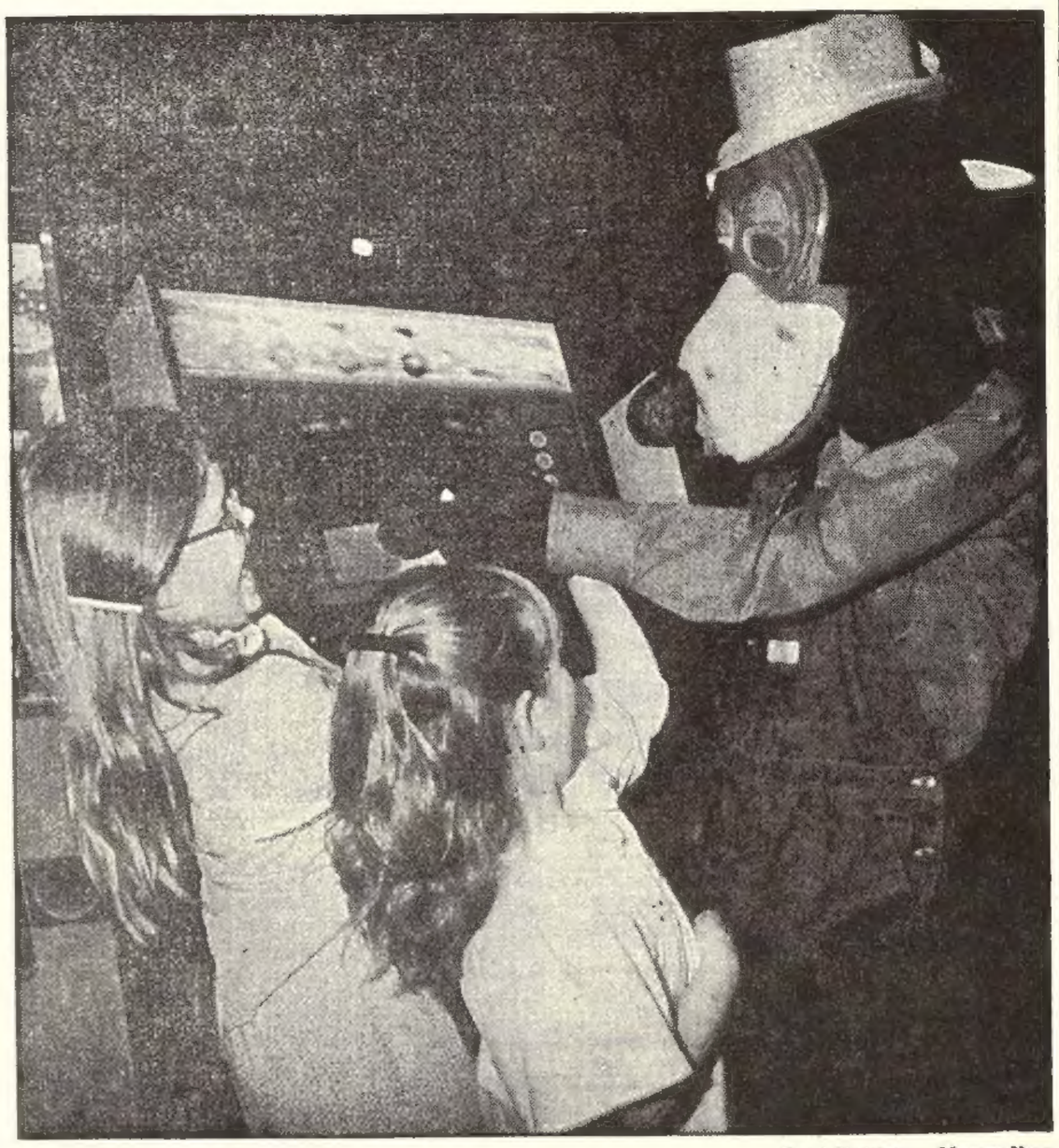

Penni Gladstone — Mercury News

Pizza Time Theater is fun, fun, fun for Nickie Hahn, 8, and Dina Rizos, 10

The man behind Dolli Dimples

Cap Carpenter — Mercury News

Mike Hatcher spends many hours at the controls

IT'S well after midnight, the electronic games have all been unplugged and the janitor has swept away the last crumbs on the floor. A quiet time.

Then Jasper T. Jowls' eyes open and move from side-to-side. Chuck E. Cheese starts blinking his eyes almost incessantly. Helen Henny throws her head back and closes her eyes.

No, it's not the nursery toys come alive. It's Mike Hatcher and his computer programming new routines for the animated characters that are an integral part of Pizza Time Theater. Hatcher works the grave-yard shift because that's the only time the Theater is quiet and he has the freedom to experiment with the animals.

It takes Hatcher a minimum of three hours of programming to produce one minute of animation. Between the animation of the characters, spotlights and flashing lights, waving flags and the musical instruments, there may be 200 movements going on at once. Each of these movements has to be programmed so that they are coordinated and in time to the music.

The 31-year-old Hatcher created personality profiles for the animals. These were transformed into moveable figures with metal skeletons covered with foam rubber, latex, fiberglass or fabric by Hardol Goldbrandsen of Fantasy Forest in Apple Valley. (The firm is now owned by Pizza Time Theater.)

While the figures were under construction, Hatcher worked with scriptwriter Bob Black to develop skits suitable for the main dining room show, as well as song medleys for Dolli Dimples.

Jeff Nabors supervised the musical recordings and 19-year-old Donna Miller of San Jose supplied Dolli's voice. Hatcher does the final programming.

Some customers insist that there must be a person inside Dolli Dimples. How else could a hippopotamus know to have her jeweled hands on the correct piano keys for the song she is playing?

Hatcher just laughs. He knows exactly how Dolli does it. After all he spends two hours for every minute she's in the spotlight.

— Mary Gottschalk

Restaurant's rich in taste but not in calories

By Susan Hathaway

NO thanks," all my thin friends replied when I offered each of them a free evening at San Jose's restaurant for dieters, Skinny Gourmet, at 1315 S. Winchester Blvd. They were doubtlessly expecting a meal of poached carrot sticks and tea, but I was rather looking forward to it.

It isn't often that a restaurant writer can eat out and not have to undo the damage later by furious jogging and a regimen of cottage cheese and lettuce. After all, who wants to look like a human version of the Houston Astrodome?

This was the first restaurant for which I lacked a waiting list of dinner companions, so as a last resort, I called my third cousin, Beebee. Since she's gone on many more diets than Baskin-Robbins has flavors, but remains in the weight range of Idi Amin, I thought she would lend an expert's critical palate. Even though she was in a lull between the Grapefruit Diet and the Protein Sparing Fast — which means she was consuming Hershey's kisses in five-pound boxes in preparation for the deprivation ahead — she said she'd love to have a dietetic dinner.

"It's kind of cute," Beebee told me when we walked into the small restaurant that's tucked away inside a San Jose shopping center. Though it's a simple, inexpensive spot, Skinny Gourmet — a small chain with eight locations — is quite pleasant. "And there's lots of room on the chairs," added Beebee, who notices those things. We both remarked on the thoughtful inclusion of calories and ingredients for all the tasty lunch and dinner items.

A frown crinkled Beebee's brow as she perused the menu. "Look at this — Lasagna, Stuffed Zucchini, Shrimp Newberg, and ice cream sundaes," she huffed. "This couldn't possibly be a dietetic restaurant!"

I was doubtful, too, until reading the calorie counts for these devilish dishes. They had at least half the calories of a single Big Mac. Besides some yummy salads priced at around $3.25, the menu included some low-cal sandwiches at around $3 each and many delicious-sounding entrees which were in the $4-$5 range.

As we loaded up at the nice salad bar, which is included with dinner, Beebee sniffed at the dressings. "These dietetic things are always awful," she pronounced, covering her salad with Thousand Island, nevertheless. We were both amazed when we tasted the dressing and assured ourselves it was low-cal after reading the menu. "This tastes better than some of the fattening dressings I've had in other restaurants," Beebee said. I quite agreed.

We also tried the tomato soup which could be substituted for salad and thought it was passable, particularly when one considers you won't have to wear it on your thighs for the next year.

"Wow!" Beebee exclaimed when her vegetarian tostada was delivered. It looked like a miniature Mt. Fuji on her plate, covered with pinto beans, vegetables, cheeses and a spicy sauce, yet totalling a chaste 258 calories. Somehow the restaurant also offers a zesty Eggplant Parmigiana and vegetarian enchiladas at similarly low calories.

"This is really good," she beamed. "And I don't even miss the tortilla." Also forgotten was the bulging sack of almond roca in her

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'We're show business with a side order of pizza'

Continued from page 1D

Company president Gene Landrum is the man responsible for taking the idea, developing it and making the whole thing click. The idea for a food-games-entertainment complex came from Nolan Bushnell, a pioneer in the video games industry who founded Atari and then sold it to Warner Communications in 1975 for $30 million.

Landrum cheerfully admits to being "a statistical nut" and will answer almost any question with the preface, "Statistics show . . ."

Among the things that statistics show, according to Landrum, are:

a) "Pizza is a fun food, a fun eating experience.

b) There is a direct correlation between people who eat pizza and play games.

c) Parents make the decision on when to eat out, but children decide where."

Landrum even has a statistical answer to the thin vs. thick crust pizza controversy. "Studies show that only in ethnic areas such as Detroit, New York and Chicago do they want thick crusts." As you might have guessed, Landrum favors the thin crusts.

The first Pizza Time Theater opened in Town and County Village, San Jose, in May 1977. Landrum considers that to be his experimentation project, where he could try out new concepts, and correct mistakes.

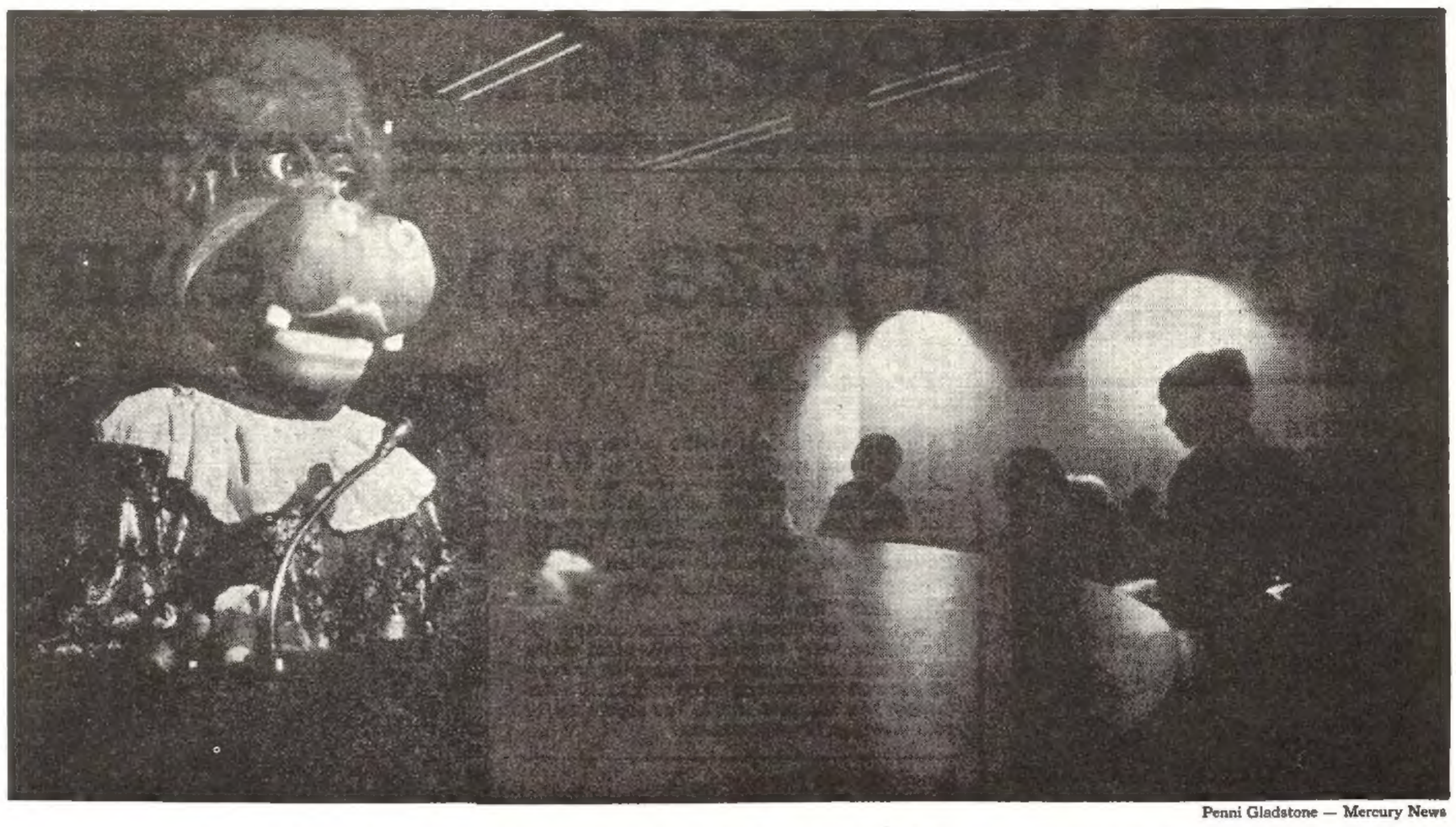
The second Pizza Time Theater, which opened in December at 1371 Kooser Road, San Jose, is not only four times larger than the original, it is also the largest pizza parlor in the world, according to Landrum. It is 20,000 square feet of eating and playing area.

Bushnell, who is chairman of the corporation, and Landrum have big plans for Pizza Time and predict that by the end of this year they will have earned $10 million in revenues. A good portion of this will come from the franchises they are planning to sell, some 1,000 over the next five years.

With $1.5 million invested in the development of the computer animation for the figures alone, it comes as no surprise that the pizzas are not cheap. The top of the line Big C Combo is $7.95 for the large size, but it is accompanied by three free game tokens. The tokens are needed to operate Dolli Dimples and most of the games and are available five for $1 when you run out of the complimentary ones.

A family of three will spend an average of $10 on a visit to Pizza Time, says Landrum. Food and drink will be $8 and the game tokens will be $2, he says.

Weekends are the most popular times at Pizza Time Theater, or as Landrum describes it, "whenever the kids are out of school." Therefore, Mondays through Thursdays double tokens are offered with each pizza.



Penni Gladstone — Mercury News

At the drop of a quarter, Dolli Dimples will do one of 20 different routines at the piano bar

Pizza Time Theater

Cap Carpenter — Mercury News

Pinball wizards Dick (left), Toby and Derek Tuttle

Penni Gladstone — Mercury News

Linda Le Bleu, 17, works in the kitchen and 'loves it'

Here's a kid-on-the-street report

Star

STAR Tuttle's two favorite things at Pizza Time are Dolli Dimples and the Big Cheese playhouse. A very decisive 7-year-old, she rated the animated characters, Chuck E. Cheese in costume and the electronic games high. Mr. Munch's Disco room didn't fare so well with a rating of 6 and as for the pizza, Star gave it a 5.

Would she come again? A very definite "yes," was her answer.

Ian

PRETTY neat," is Ian Tuttle's analysis of Pizza Time and while he agreed with his two older brothers on the electronic games the 9-year-old was also very taken with Mr. Munch's Disco room, the pizza and the drinks. In fact, about the only thing he didn't rate high was Chuck E. Cheese in costume, which got a lowly 2.

In spite of all his enthusiasim, Ian was indecisive about a return visit. Would he come again? "Maybe."

Toby

TOBY Tuttle was most taken with the electronic games and the animated characters. The 14-year-old San Josean says he would visit Pizza Time Theater in the future and thinks it might make a good stopping off place after the movies.

Toby considered the pizza and soft drinks to rate 8. The only aspect of the operation he rated below a 6 is the computer room, which he gives a rating of 4.

Derek

ELECTRONIC games and animated characters also rated high with Derek Tuttle. He says he would come again and joined his older brother Toby in rating the pizza and soft drinks at 8.

On the whole, 12-year-old Derek was enthusiastic about Pizza Time and the lowest rating he gave was a 6 for Mr. Munch's Disco room. The Big Cheese playhouse, Dolli Dimples and Chuck E. Cheese in costume all rated 7s.

Mom and Pop have opinions, too

TO find out if Pizza Time Theater is truly hitting the mark it is aiming at, we asked a San Jose family to rate the different attractions on a scale of 1 to a top of 10 and invited their comments.

It was the first visit for Dick and Joann Tuttle and their four children: Toby, 14; Derek, 12; Ian, 9; and Star, 7. Mrs. Tuttle thinks the theater is "a nice place to bring your family" and says she would come again. She most enjoyed Dolli Dimples and the other singing characters and rated the Big C's Combo pizza at 9.

Tuttle was less enthusiastic, saying he would return but "not frequently." A high school instructor and car collector, Tuttle was most interested in the animated animals and the techniques behind them. He rated the pizza at 8.

For the reactions and ratings of the Tuttle children, see above.

Theater Listings

THE PLAY'S THE THING, California Actors Theater, Old Town Theater, Old Town, Los Gatos, Thursday and Friday, 8 p.m., Saturday, 5 and 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, 7 p.m. Ends Sunday.

WHERE'S CHARLEY, Saratoga Drama Group, Saratoga Civic Theater, 13777 Fruitvale Ave., Saratoga, Thursday, 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, 2:30 p.m.

THE TAVERN, Berkeley Repertory Theater, 2980 College Ave., Berkeley, Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m. and Sunday, 2 and 7 p.m. Ends April 8.

ALL NIGHT STRUT, On Broadway Theater, 435 Broadway, San Francisco, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 7:30 and 10 p.m. Ends April 15.

BEACH BLANKET BABYLON GOES TO THE STARS, Club Fugazi, 678 Green St., San Francisco, Thursday, 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 8 and 10:30 p.m. and Sunday, 3 and 7:30 p.m.

THE FANTASTICKS, Cannery Theater, 2801 Leavenworth St., San Francisco, Thursday and Friday, 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 7 and 10 p.m.

IRVING BERLIN REVUE, Chi Chi Club, 440 Broadway, San Francisco, Saturday, 8:30 and 11 p.m.

MAGNETIC KISSES, Magic Theater, Laguna and Marina Blvds., San Francisco, and Thursday through Saturday, 8:30 p.m. Ends April 29.

HEARTBREAK HOUSE, American Conservatory Theater, Geary Theater, 450 Geary St., San Francisco, Friday, 8 p.m.

HAY FEVER, American Conservatory Theater, Geary Theater, 450 Geary St., San Francisco, Thursday, 8 p.m., Saturday, 2:30 p.m.

HOSEA, rock musical, Palo Alto Community Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, Thursday, 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, 2:30 p.m. Ends March 28.

BOOK OF REVELATION, Omega-Alpha, Trinity Center, Bancroft and Dana streets, Berkeley, Thursday through Saturday, 8 p.m. and Sunday, 7:30 p.m. Ends April 8.

THE BEGGAR'S OPERA, West Valley College drama department, Saratoga campus theater, Thursday, 8:15 p.m. through Sunday. Ends Sunday.

THE TAVERN, TheatreWorks, Palo Alto Community Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, Thursday, 8 p.m.

ROSENCRANTZ AND GILDENSTERN ARE DEAD, Actors' Ark Theater, Epic West, 2640 College Ave., Berkeley, Thursday, 8:30 p.m. through Saturday. Ends March 31.

GOD'S FAVORITE, Los Altos Conservatory Theater, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos, Thursday, 8 p.m. and Saturday.

HOTHOUSE, Julian Theater, 953 De Haro St., San Francisco, Thursday, 8 p.m. through Saturday, with matinee, Saturday, 3 p.m. Ends April 7.

IN SPLENDID ERROR, Oakland Ensemble Theater, 660 13th St., Oakland, Thursday, 8:30 p.m. through Saturday, and Sunday, 5:30 p.m. Ends Sunday.

LOVERS AND OTHER STRANGERS, Mountain View Community Dinner Theater, 201 S. Rengstorff Ave., Mountain View, Thursday, 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday. Ends Saturday.

THE PERILS OF PENELOPE, OR A DIRTY DEED, Gaslight Theater, 400 E. Campbell Ave., Campbell, Friday, 8:30 p.m. and Saturday. Ends March 31.

THE RED-HOT RUBBER-DUCKY REVUE, musical comedy, Foster City Civic Center, Hillsdale and Foster City streets, Foster City, Friday, 8:30 p.m. and Saturday. Ends Saturday.

CALAMITY AT WHISKEY BAR, Opry House Dinner-Theater, 21350 Almaden Road, Friday, 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, 7:30 and 10:30 p.m.

CODA, and "Points of Departure," Asian American Theater Workshop, 4344 California St., San Francisco, Friday, 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, and Sunday, 7:30 p.m. Ends April 22.

A PIZZA AND PENNY ARCADE / THE MAN BEHIND DOLLI DIMPLES

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